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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6350

November 17, 1999

The Honorable David M. Walker  
Comptroller General of the United States  
General Accounting Office  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20548


Dear Mr. Walker:

As Chairman of the Senate Small Business Committee, I have followed with great interest the reports the General Accounting Office (GAO) has issued over the last 16 months to the Senate Special Committee on Aging highlighting the extent of serious quality of care problems in our nation's nursing homes. Since the American Health Care Association reports that nearly half of the nation's 17,000 nursing homes are independently owned and operated, nursing home care is of particular concern to the small business community.

I am requesting that GAO conduct an analysis to determine whether there are significant differences in indicators of quality of care between those independently owned and operated nursing homes and those that are part of a large chain that owns or leases multiple facilities. In particular, this analysis should examine indicators such as the extent of repeated serious deficiencies cited by state surveyors; the volume of complaints filed against nursing homes; and the number and types of enforcement actions taken against the homes. I am especially concerned about reports I have received from Missouri residents regarding inadequate nursing home care, too often resulting in injuries to residents such as severe pressure sores, rapid declines in body weight due to inadequate nutrition, and dehydration. Therefore, I would ask that you include the 600 Missouri nursing homes in your review.

I believe that this study will build on the important work GAO has conducted in this area and enhance our understanding of nursing home care in Missouri and whether differences in care exist depending on ownership. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Emilia DiSanto of my staff at (202) 224- . Thank you in advance for your assistance on this matter.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Bond  
Chairman